

February 4, 2026

Bruce Herman
Baltimore, MD 21212

TESTIMONY ON SB 0323 - POSITION: Favorable
Youth Charging Reform Act.

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Dr. Bruce Herman

My name is Bruce Herman. I am a resident of District 43B. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0323, Youth Charging Reform Act.

As a Maryland-licensed psychologist, I have dedicated my career to working with young people. My commitment to this issue is also rooted in personal experience, as I have had family members and neighbors who have been directly impacted by youth violence. While this personal experience has helped me understand the frustration with some dysfunctional aspects of the Maryland Juvenile Justice system and the call for meaningful reform, I am firmly convinced that automatically transferring children who have committed crimes into the adult criminal justice system is not the solution. Every child deserves to live a life with dignity, respect, and safety, and we deserve to benefit from all they can bring to our state.

The practice of treating children as adults in our system only severely diminishes their potential for rehabilitation and their ability to function as productive citizens. We cannot afford to abandon this significant proportion of our state's most vital future resource: our children. The Youth Charging Reform Act will redirect our focus away from the counterproductive and inhumane practice of treating children as adults, allowing us to concentrate on establishing appropriate, evidence-based alternatives within the juvenile system.

This legislation is essential for securing a positive future for Maryland's children and ensuring that our state upholds the standards of justice, reform and humanity we aspire to. I respectfully and strongly urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 0323 on February 4, 2026.